



COMMUNITY
WATERS

SOIL & WATER STEWARDSHIP 2000

WE ALL LIVE IN A WATERSHED

A watershed area is made up of land that sheds water into a common water body, such as a stream, river or lake. People, animals, birds and fish depend on a healthy watershed to sustain life. A watershed could be as small as your own backyard or as large as the Mississippi River Basin. Regardless of size, the following are actions you can take to maintain the health of your watershed.

- 1** Create a mini-wetland in your backyard to help filter pollution and prevent flooding.
- 2** Contact your local conservation district or watershed group to learn about water resources and uses in your watershed.
- 3** Test your soil and check for insect damage in your yard so you can apply only the fertilizer and pesticides needed.
- 4** Talk to your elected officials about watershed management work going on in your local watershed.
- 5** If you water your lawn and garden, consider more efficient systems such as drip irrigation or capturing rainwater from your rooftop.
- 6** Cross political boundaries and reach out to other communities to deal with watershed-wide issues.
- 7** Build backyard terraces to soak up heavy rains and prevent soil erosion from runoff.
- 8** When you think about water, think in terms of future needs. Conservation is about the future.

TRY YOUR HAND AT THIS

Turn this placemat over and trace your hand on the back. Using this illustrated example of the Mississippi River Basin (a very large watershed), label the outline of your own hand with the names of a major river or bay and its tributaries in your local area. If you are not able to name the waterways that make up your watershed, take time to identify them and learn about what you can do to improve the quality of water that flows from your watershed through *your* water tap.

